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139 CTA routes,
1 columnist **4**

Kwanzaa songs
are in the air **9**

Who is Chicago's
biggest stud? **12**

Geek-worthy
video games **19**



Are energy
drinks too much
of a caffeine thing? **6-7**

BY MARGARET SMITH | METROMIX@TRIBUNE.COM » GET MORE EAT. DRINK. DO. IDEAS AT REDEYETCHICAGO.COM



COOK TO IMPRESS

Markethouse

611 N. Fairbanks Ct. 312-224-2200

Hosting a party for New Year's Eve? Create some fancy hors d'oeuvres with help from chef Scott Walton and his Heartland 101 Chef Series, a bimonthly cooking class at this farm fresh restaurant. Walton demonstrates how to prepare five dishes, and each class includes recipes, tastings and drink pairings. 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$45; RSVP required.

DRINK

DRINKING 'ROUND THE WORLD

Lockwood Restaurant

17 E. Monroe St. 312-917-3404

Drink up at Regional Wine Journey, a biweekly class where fanatics can learn about the history and native fermentation process of different wine regions. Hosted by restaurant wine director Sasa Sinanagic, Tuesday is all about Madeira in Portugal. 5:30-6:30 p.m. \$25; RSVP recommended.

WINE TIME

Green Grocer

1402 W. Grand Ave.
312-624-9508

Sip away at a winetasting hosted by this West Town food shop featuring two Spanish wines, bubbly cava and the red tempranillo. 5-7 p.m.



DO

HAPPY KWANZAA

DuSable Museum of African American History

740 E. 56th Place
773-947-0600

The holidays aren't over yet. Celebrate Kwanzaa at The Lighting of the Kinara Candles, a special exhibit where a different candle is lit each day. Tuesday's ceremony includes the first two candles, Umoja (unity) and Kujichagulia (self-determination). 1 p.m. Free with museum admission.



MAKE IT SNAPPY

Cadillac Palace Theatre

151 W. Randolph St. 800-775-2000

They're creepy and they're kooky, mysterious and and spooky, they're altogether ooky ... well, you know the rest. Gomez, Morticia, Wednesday and the rest of the gang are back in Chicago for a weeklong return engagement of their Broadway musical, "The Addams Family." 7:30 p.m. \$37-\$100.



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REDEYE TIP OF THE DAY

Only five more days left in 2011. How are you going to make it last?

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Know your (return) rights



Customers return products to a Brandsmart store in Florida on Monday. The Better Business Bureau has some advice to help customers as well as retailers make returning gifts as smooth as possible. **SUN SENTINEL**

Want to upgrade those boring holiday gifts? First, get the facts

Chicago Tribune

That wonderful gift from under the tree might not be such a perfect fit now that it's been unwrapped, and a deluge of returns is expected to begin this week.

The Better Business Bureau cautions that returning or exchanging items is a privilege, not a right—a business is not obligated to accept items for refund, exchange or credit except in cases where the item is defective or misrepresented.

“Inevitably, following the holidays, the BBB receives hundreds of complaints from consumers because they’re not able to return a gift,” said Steve J. Bernas, Better Business Bureau president & CEO. “It’s important for consumers to know that retailers have specific return and exchange policies and unless the merchandise is defective or misrepresented, your

“Inevitably, following the holidays, the BBB receives hundreds of complaints from consumers because they’re not able to return a gift.”

—Steve J. Bernas, Better Business Bureau president and CEO

purchase could be final.”

In some cases, defective products must be returned to the manufacturer rather than the retailer, and health regulations might forbid returns of such items as hats, fragrances, bathing suits or intimate apparel.

The BBB has some suggestions for helping make the experience of gift returns less stressful for customers and retailers.

Keep the receipt

Receipts make or break a smooth return process. Make a plan to keep them, get copies, or consider giving them with your gift.

Check the policy rules

Most retailers post their return policies and provide a written copy of the policy upon request. The store's return policy should include whether returns are subject to any fees, including restocking fees. In some cases, defective products must be returned to the manufacturer rather than the retailer based upon the product's warranty.

Don't open packaged gifts

If there's any doubt you want to keep it, hold off on the scissors. Packaged toys, housewares or electronics can be difficult to return once opened unless the item is damaged.

Act fast

Many stores post special holiday return policies, and the more time that ticks by, the more hoops you'll have to jump through. Know when the returns are accepted by, which is generally 30 days from the date of purchase.

Do you want cash back?

Stores that offer refunds as a policy do so voluntarily and, in most cases, are not compelled by state or federal law to do so. In almost every case, a sales slip or some other evidence that the item actually was purchased at a particular store also is required.

Check the warranty

Some products have warranties that spell out the manufacturer's liability if the product is defective. Reading a product's warranty before returning an item to a store is highly recommended. Always read and understand a contract before you sign it; never sign a blank contract and always keep a copy of the contract.

Lessons from a CTA journey



GOING PUBLIC

Tracy Swartz

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The end is here.

Every week since April 2009, I took a different CTA bus in an attempt to ride every route from end to end. The project ended Thursday after 139 routes.

After more than 2½ years of riding buses, I have picked up some wisdom (and a deep appreciation for personal space).

» Some bus drivers aren't just drivers—they also serve as confidants. It's interesting to watch the dynamic between rider and driver. Many riders ignore drivers while some chat away with them as they steer the bus. On one University of Chicago route, a bus driver asked riders about a female rider who wasn't on the bus. The riders said she was running a few minutes behind. The driver waited for her.

» If bus drivers are driving faster than their schedule, some will stop at green lights just to get back on schedule. This can be frustrating to riders who just want to get to their destinations.

» Customer service, as a whole, is good. Bus drivers are multitaskers. They have to drive the bus, watch traffic and help riders who need assistance amid noise and crowds on the bus. Very few times did I see a rude driver.

» Riders, on the other hand, aren't always polite. There are riders who throw their food on the floor, yell at the driver or other passengers, loudly talk or play music on their cellphones and bang on the windows if they miss their stop.



RIDER'S BLOCK

My pledge to ride every CTA bus line concludes. I rode the No. 85A-North Central last week and boiled my review down to a tweet. @tracyswartz 17 mins from Jefferson Park Blue Line to Touhy/Lehigh. Runs about every half an hour. Bus fills quickly with CTA employees. Stops by Metra.

Record: 139 routes down, 0 to go!

'L'-EBRATE NEW YEAR'S

The CTA again will offer New Year's rides for a penny from 10 p.m. Saturday until 4 a.m. Sunday. To avoid paying full fare, riders should pay the fare with a penny and not with their Chicago Cards. Meanwhile, Miller Lite is offering free shuttle service in the Loop and on the North Side from 7 p.m. Saturday until 2 a.m. Sunday. Visit millerlitefreerides.com for information.

» Priority seating is intended for the elderly and people with disabilities, but even if you fall into these categories there's still some dispute over who should sit where. After suffering a stress fracture last year, I became acquainted with the priority seating system and witnessed arguments over who in that area was "more disabled" and deserved the coveted seat at the front of the bus next to the space where bags can be placed.

» There are few amenities at CTA stations that double as bus depots such as the Midway Orange and 95th Red stops. There are a couple of heaters to share at the 95th Red Line stop, and while riders can wait for their bus inside the Midway stop, it can get pretty chilly in there as well.

» There are some oddly placed bus stops. The No. 54B South Cicero travels between the Ford City Mall and Cermak/Kenton, a nondescript stop by an auto store and blocks away from the Cicero Pink Line. The No. 152-Addison travels on Addison Street between the lake shore and a Cumberland Avenue stop by Schiller Woods.

» CTA buses are the cheapest and easiest way to get to know Chicago. And if you decide to ride all of them, just remember that patience and hand washing go a long way.

TWEET INDEX

HOT RIGHT NOW

The day after

Christmas is over, which means it's time to look forward to the next big holiday:

New Year's. Here's what was trending on Twitter on Monday in Chicago.



NYE

Pick your party



Boxing Day

No fighting



Taylor Lautner

Twitter loves rumors



BGC

Good day for "Bad Girls Club" reruns



Rose
US PRESSWIRE

BIG TALKERS

Did you SEE that Bulls game on Sunday? Looking every bit the NBA MVP he is, Derrick Rose led the Bulls to a last-second win over the Lakers in L.A.—and got a Chuck Norris-style trending topic in the process, courtesy of Lupe Fiasco. Here is a sampling of the #SmellTheRoses tweets.

- » When Derrick Rose looks into a mirror his reflection asks for an autograph. —@lupefiasco
- » LeBron is a witness of Derrick Rose —@supposedvillain
- » Even Noah was impressed with the way Derrick Rose saved the bulls.... Old testament Noah. —@bestincmass
- » Ke\$ha wakes up in the morning feeling like Derrick Rose, not P Diddy. —@conman311
- » Derrick Rose doesn't stop before it's hammer time —@joelhadley
- » Chicago is from Derrick Rose —@itsmemozey
- » Derrick Rose broke Chuck Norris' ankles while sitting on the bench. —@djtrustorey
- » Derrick Rose warms up after the game —@bradykennedy12

GET APPED!

You want news, CTA times and dining suggestions? Then what are you waiting for? Get RedEye's app for Android or the iPhone.



CORRECTION

A photo of John Witherspoon was used inadvertently on Page 29 of Friday's RedEye to accompany a story that mentioned Rickey Smiley.

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CAFFEINE

Everyone loves caffeine.

In North America alone, some research has concluded, up to 90 percent of adults say they consume caffeine regularly. Yet for centuries, it has been occasionally attacked as an unhealthy—even immoral—substance.

Consider coffee, a potent caffeine delivery system. According to coffee trader and historian Antony Wild's book "Coffee: A Dark History," the beverage was first widely consumed in the 15th century by Yemeni Sufis, mystic adherents of Islam who depended on coffee to stay awake for nighttime rituals.

But by 1511, after the drink had arrived in Mecca, some had become suspicious. Kah'ir Bey, ruler of the city, banned coffee after a long debate about its spiritual purity. The decree, however, didn't last long: When the coffee-loving Ottoman Empire conquered the region in 1517, Wild writes, two doctors who had supported the ban were chopped in two at the waist.

Coffee criticism, though, continued to surface in the Middle East and eventually Europe, where the drink caught on in the 17th century.

More challenges came in the 20th century, when caffeine became a crucial part of the soft drink industry. In 1911, the federal government sued Coca-Cola for selling a beverage that contained the supposedly harmful ingredient.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration took another hard look at caffeine in 1980 and initially proposed eliminating it from soft drinks. Soda companies countered that it was a "flavor enhancer" that should be allowed, and the agency eventually agreed.

"If caffeine had not been accepted as a flavor enhancer, but had been regarded as a psychoactive ingredient, soft drinks might have been regulated by the FDA as drugs," wrote a trio of Johns Hopkins University scholars, summing up the controversy in a 2009 research paper. **TRIBUNE**

HYPE OR



MCT FILE PHOTO

HARMFUL?

Thinking of mixing energy drinks and booze over New Year's? Concoction problems on the rise, report says

Chicago Tribune

Emily Marchant had a can of Red Bull at her elbow as she went over an assignment in a Harper College library carrel. She is a long-standing fan of the beverage, usually drinking one a day when she needs a boost.

But she also knows what it's like to take it too far. Two years ago, she was a designated driver for pub-hopping friends in England when she absent-mindedly downed four of the drinks. She ended up with a bad case of the shakes that lasted for hours.

"Yeah," she said, "that didn't work out so good."

Marchant, 21, of Lake in the Hills, recovered, but according to a federal report, some energy drink fans haven't been so lucky: Emergency room visits involving the beverages have risen tenfold in the U.S. since 2005. While many of the visits were the result of combining energy drinks with alcohol or drugs, 56 percent were due to the consumption of energy drinks alone.

The report, issued last month by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is the latest piece of criticism directed at the fast-growing, multibillion-dollar energy drink industry. Some researchers and physicians say the beverages, which typically contain lots of caffeine, are unhealthy.

"The kids are coming in with heart palpi-

tations, lightheadedness, dizziness, feeling faint and headaches," said Dr. Todd Zimmerman, medical director of EmergiKids for the Alexian Brothers Health System. "Then we go through the history, and it turns out they're drinking up to eight to 12 of these drinks a day."

The American Beverage Association, which represents the drink makers, attacked the federal report, saying it did not account for the overall health of the people who had supposedly downed energy drinks. It said the cases—13,114 in 2009, the latest year reported—accounted for a tiny percentage of the nation's 123 million yearly ER visits.

The association also contended that mainstream energy drinks have half the caffeine of an equivalent-size cup of coffee. Some researchers, though, compare them to soft drinks, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found to be much more popular than coffee among teens.

Art Kubic, a pharmacist at the Illinois Poison Center, said 60 of its 81,000 calls last year were related to energy drinks. He said caffeine overdoses can produce a range of unpleasant symptoms.

"If it's something where they're feeling a little sick to their stomach and have thrown up, we'll say avoid any sources of caffeine, other stimulants, nasal decongestants, then

“Caffeine is the most commonly used psychoactive drug in the world. Many people do use it without any problems at all. But anytime you're talking about a drug, that can have problems associated with it.” —Daniel Evatt, John Hopkins researcher

follow up in a couple of hours,” he said. “If those more concerning symptoms develop—palpitations, multiple vomiting, fast heart rate—we'd be more likely to send them [to a hospital].”

Daniel Evatt, a Johns Hopkins researcher who has studied caffeine dependence, said warning labels might be a good idea, especially since energy drink marketing—often with images of skateboarding, BMX racing and other extreme sports—seems designed to appeal to young people who might not have a large tolerance for caffeine.

“Caffeine is the most commonly used psychoactive drug in the world,” he said. “Many people do use it without any problems at all. But anytime you're talking about a drug, that can have problems associated with it.”

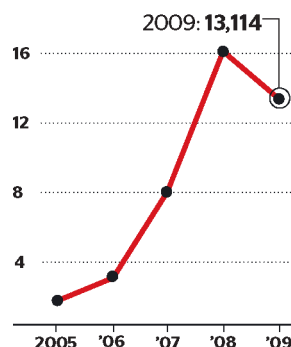
Brad Karlson, an 18-year-old student at Harper College in Palatine, said he researches energy drinks and monitors his heart rate to be sure his daily can of Monster Energy is safe. He's concluded that all is well.

“I'm pretty sure it gives me a little bit of a boost, but I don't [notice the effects] anymore,” he said.

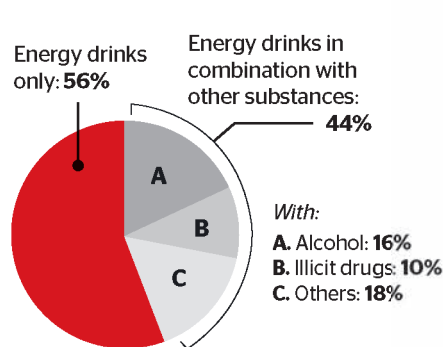
ENERGY DRINKS: INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Emergency room visits involving the beverages have risen tenfold in the U.S. since 2005.

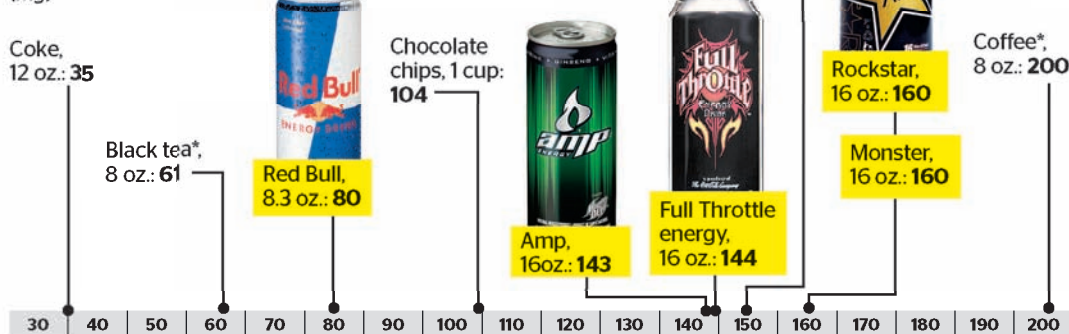
ENERGY DRINK-RELATED EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS (in thousands)



DRUG AND ENERGY DRINK COMBINATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR EMERGENCY VISITS



CAFFEINE CONTENT (mg)



*Caffeine can vary; tea from 14-61 and coffee from 95-200

SOURCES: DAWN REPORT, MAYO CLINIC; TRIBUNE GRAPHIC



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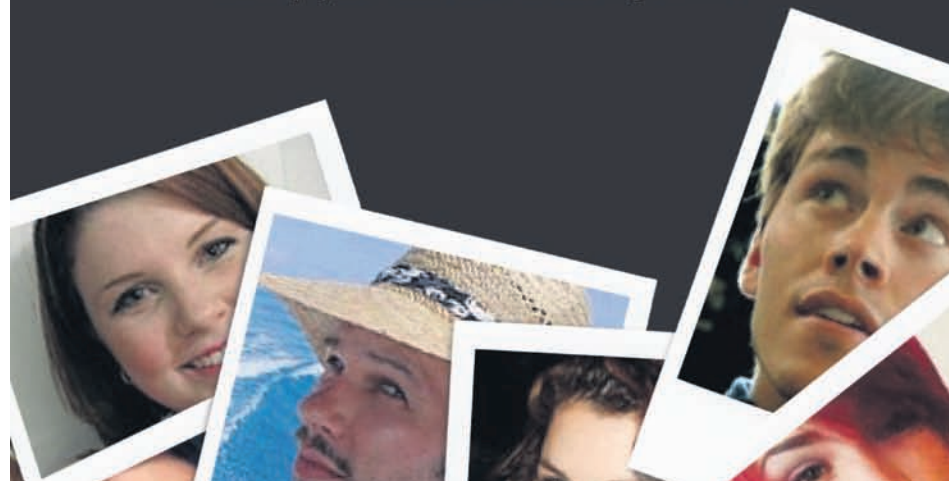
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A TIME FOR CELEBRATION

HUNDREDS HONOR LATE FOUNDER OF KWANZAA EVENT AT MALCOLM X COLLEGE



Chavunduka sings Monday during the opening ceremonies for Malcolm X College's Kwanzaa celebration. BRENT LEWIS/TRIBUNE

Chicago Tribune

For nearly two decades, folks have gathered at Malcolm X College to celebrate Kwanzaa, a non-religious holiday created to honor and preserve African-American history and heritage.

But Monday marked the first time they did so without Baba Hannibal Afrik, who is credited with starting the local event. The former Faragut High School teacher, whose Swahili name translates to "father," died last summer at 77.

Those attending opening ceremonies, however, were not mourning Afrik, Malcolm X professor Reginah Walton said as she stood

before a shrine dedicated to Afrik and others. "We are celebrating his transition to the ancestral realm," Walton said, explaining that death does not amount to "the end" according to African belief.

Hundreds gathered at the West Side college for the 17th edition of the Kwanzaa celebration, which began with a traditional African ceremony. Elsewhere, vendors readied booths piled high with brightly colored dashikis and handmade jewelry, while drummers filled the hallways with an echoing African rhythm.

Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa repre-

sents a principle, including purpose, creativity and faith, set out to guide people through the course of their daily lives. On Monday, the principle was unity.

"It's good to keep the principles in your head throughout the year," said Attia Gray, 14, of Hammond, Ind., who has been attending the Kwanzaa festival since she was a child.

Her mother, Kitten Gray, a vendor, said she and her children have benefited from being part of the community, which she described as an extended family.

"Through the grace of God, we always find

what we need," she said.

Many will return Tuesday for a special tribute to Afrik.

"To lose Baba is like losing an arm," said Shirley McLaurine, 62, a South Side resident.

As boys, McLaurine's two grandsons attended Shule Ya Watoto, a Lawndale institution started by Afrik to offer children's classes in African heritage.

"He brought us everything we didn't know about ourselves, about Africa," she said. "For my grandsons, it gave them a kind of manhood they would not have known about."

DAILY QUOTABLE

“These animals died in horrific, tragic accidents. But we have to draw a line with a program like this.”

— IDOT spokesman Guy Tridgell, explaining why officials will deny PETA's request for an official roadside memorial sign for 16 cattle killed in a May 22 truck accident near Hazel Crest. The law states that only a "qualified relative" may file a request.

EXPRESS LINES

- » The tables were turned on a would-be iPhone robber who was pursued by the victim—a former wrestler—into a Loop pub and arrested early Saturday, police said.
- » Police on Monday were seeking the driver of a sport-utility vehicle who hit the side of an East Garfield Park neighborhood church and then fled the scene.
- » An autopsy Sunday determined a 35-year-old man who was hit by a car in Bucktown early Saturday morning took his own life, authorities said.
- » A 21-year-old man suffered a gunshot wound to the upper torso Monday evening in an attack at a South Loop "L" station in the 1100 block of South State Street, police reported. The man was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in serious-to-critical condition.
- » An intoxicated man drove his car into an exterior concrete wall at the Gresham District police station on the 7800 block of South Halsted Street early Monday, police said. Nobody was injured. **TRIBUNE**



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GETTY IMAGES

1 A statue for Jobs

A Hungarian software company unveiled what it said was the world's first bronze statue of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs on Wednesday, calling him one of the greatest personalities of the modern age. Jobs died Oct. 5.

2 Christmas slayings

A gunman who killed six people and himself at a family Christmas celebration outside in Grapevine, Texas, was dressed in a Santa Claus suit when he opened fire, police said Monday.

Can you lie to me now?

A new paper to be published next year in the Journal of Business Ethics finds that people are more likely to lie via text compared with face-to-face communications, video conferencing or audio chat.

Bombing toll rises

The death toll from the worst of several church bombings Christmas Day in Nigeria has reached 32, an emergency official told CNN Monday. Blasts were reported at churches in five cities Sunday. A day later, details from some areas still were not fully clear.

Bodies wash ashore

The death toll from the tropical storm that lashed the southern Philippines slightly more than a week ago has topped 1,200, the government said Monday, as the bodies of people swept out to sea by flash floods washed ashore.

**FIRE HITS PHILIPPINES**

4 A resident crosses a river as a fire engulfs shanties Monday on Legarda Street in Manila, Philippines. Local media reported that at least 150 shanties were razed in the fire. **REUTERS**

Soldier paralyzed at homecoming

5 California police were searching Monday for a man accused of shooting and paralyzing a U.S. Army member at a homecoming party in his honor.

Christopher Sullivan, 22, had just returned home from Kentucky, where he was stationed while recovering from injuries sustained during a suicide bombing attack in December 2010 while he was in Afghanistan.

Sullivan, 22, was shot at the party in his honor on Friday after an "argument and physical confrontation" with 19-year-old Ruben Ray Jurado, San Bernadino police Sgt. Pete Higgins told CNN. He is wanted on charges of attempted murder, police said.

The fight broke out after Jurado and Sullivan's younger brother began arguing about football,

PURPLE HEART HONOREE

The San Bernardino County Sun reported that Army Spc. Christopher Sullivan narrowly survived a suicide bomb attack, which killed five members of his unit and left him with a cracked collarbone and brain damage. Sullivan was awarded the Purple Heart after the incident.

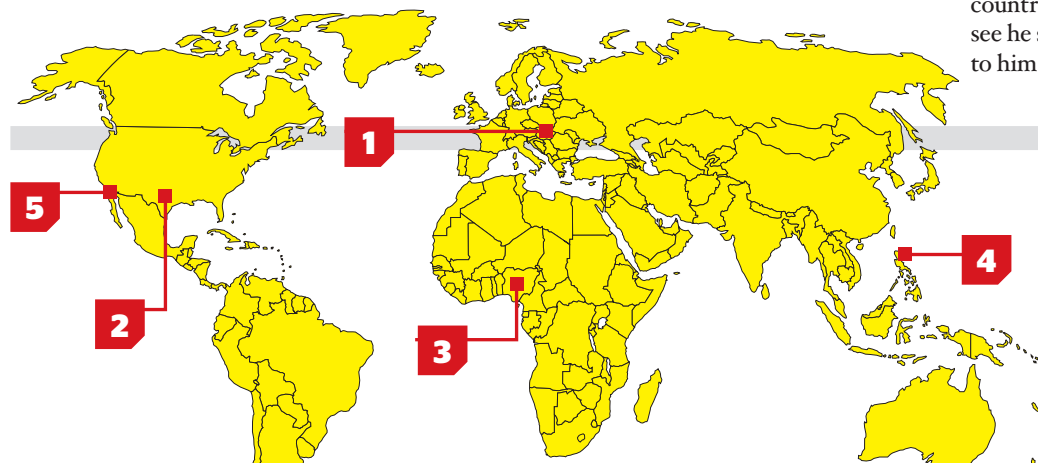
Sullivan's mother told CNN.

Suzanne Sullivan said she was distraught over the news that her son, who was already recovering from injuries sustained during his tour abroad, had returned home only to be paralyzed during a party in the U.S.

"He once told me that if defending this country takes his life, so be it," she said. "But to see he survived that and now for this to happen to him just breaks my heart."

THE DIGIT

18 That's how many people were in the civilian delegation of South Koreans who traveled to North Korea on Monday to pay their respects to late leader Kim Jong Il, lying in state at Kumsusan Memorial Palace.



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sports

2011
TOPS
+
FLOPSWHO WERE CHICAGO
SPORTS' STUDS AND
DUDS THIS YEAR?
TELL US

As 2011 draws to a close, it's that time of year to crown the Chicago sports winners and losers of the past 12 months. But first—you, loyal RedEye readers, have to vote for them.

Nominations have been pouring in the past couple of weeks, and now we can unveil the top 10 candidates for each category with their accomplishments—or failures—of the year.

So without further ado, the nominees for Chicago Sports Studs and Duds of 2011.

STUDS



1

Chicago Bandits

Won the 2011 National Pro Fastpitch softball championship, their second in three years.



2

Mark Buehrle

Mr. Reliable went 13-9 for the White Sox and pitched more than 200 innings yet again.



3

Starlin Castro

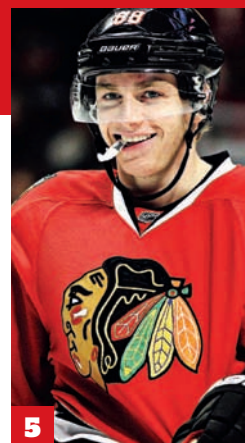
The Cubs' bright spot? He had 207 hits, a .307 average, 66 RBIs and 22 stolen bases.



4

Matt Forte

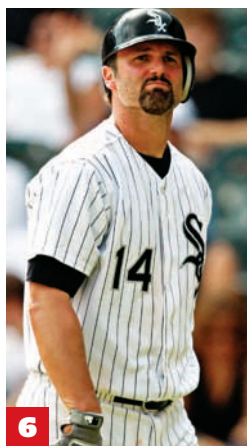
Racked up almost 1,500 all-purpose yards before being injured Dec. 4.



5

Patrick Kane

He's already racked up nine goals and 25 assists this season after tallying 27 and 46 in 2010-11.



6

Paul Konerko

31 homers, 105 RBIs, a .300 average and all class.



7

Dominic Oduro

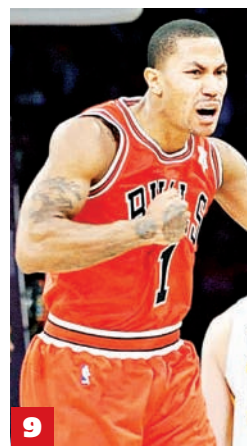
Led the Chicago Fire with 12 goals and two assists.



8

CM Punk

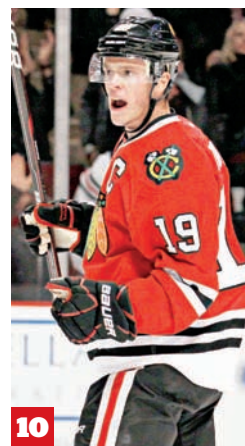
Became WWE champion during a hometown match at Allstate Arena.



9

Derrick Rose

Was the NBA MVP and led the Bulls to the Eastern Conference finals.



10

Jonathan Toews

Is on an MVP pace for the 2011-12 season. He finished 2010-11 as the Hawks leader in points (32 goals, 44 assists).

VOTE!

txtable

It's your turn. Vote for your choice by texting "stud" or "dud" followed by the number next to your choice to **87708**. You'll get the results of the voting so far sent back to you. Or go to redeyechicago.com/sports and vote in our poll.

DUDS



1

Marion Barber

Two costly mistakes against Denver a few weeks ago earned him a late nomination from fans.



2

Gordon Beckham

The "next big thing" continued to be mediocre with 10 homers, 44 RBIs and a .230 average.



3

Keith Bogans

Averaged a whopping 4.4 points per game as a starting shooting guard in the NBA.



4

Jay Cutler

Two season-ending injuries in one calendar year is a feat that won't soon be duplicated.



5

Adam Dunn

Where to start? He hit .159. Had just 11 homers. And set a Sox record with 177 strikeouts.



6

Caleb Hanie

Went 0-4 as Bears starting quarterback in place of Jay Cutler.



7

Sam Hurd

Made no impact on the team, then was arrested on federal drug charges.



8

Jake Peavy

Limited to 18 starts due to injury, going 7-7 with a 4.92 ERA. Not a Cy Young performance.



9

Roy Williams

Had more dropped passes (too many to count) than touchdowns (1) for the Bears.



10

Carlos Zambrano

Went 9-7 but his season ended abruptly when he left a game early then was suspended.

THE STARTING LINE

► Illinois vs. Minnesota, 6:30 p.m. Big Ten Network ► Bears quarterback Jay Cutler having pins removed from his right thumb Tuesday but won't play Sunday.



Missouri celebrates its 78-74 win over Illinois on Thursday in St. Louis. MCT

The ill of victory isn't so pretty



Chris Sosa

» chsosa@tribune.com
» @sayitssosa

My dear readers, I approach you today with a sobering topic of sorts.

Near the end of each year, thousands of Midwesterners are afflicted with December Dope Disorder. It's most prevalent the day Illinois and Missouri play their annual Braggin' Rights basketball game.

On the surface, these people appear normal: man-hugging complete strangers, standing throughout the game for no apparent reason, etc. However, researchers—i.e. a certain RedEye columnist who attended Thursday's 78-74 Tigers win—have pinpointed several unmistakable symptoms.

» Rationalizing a 600-mile, overnight road trip to St. Louis three days before Christmas when there are presents to be purchased and wrapped.

» Wearing Santa hats despite their obvious clash with garish orange or magnificent gold shirts. (My bad, fashion police.)

» Shouting three-letter sequences randomly in public settings (side streets, train platforms, hotel lobbies) and expecting a

response, whether it's the grating "I-L-L, I-N-I!" or the melodious "M-I-Z, Z-O-U!" This behavior often is considered a competition in and of itself.

» Missouri grads tweaking Illinois fans via sports column after a Tigers victory.

Please do not assume this malady is localized to these two states, either. Longtime friends living two time zones away are known to send sexually suggestive text messages at halftime predicting a comeback from an 11-point deficit. (Almost, Illini fans. Almost.)

Even the next day, compatriots will question said columnist's loyalty to his home state of Illinois: "So where did you celebrate your victory last night, traitor?" (Maniacal laughter usually defuses these potentially explosive situations.)

Note that serious cases of DDD can spur the onset of I-wish-I-were-back-in-college-itis. The tell-tale signs of this are impromptu karaoke of "(Forget) You," "Piano Man" and "Don't Stop Believin'," followed by 2 a.m. visits to White Castle.

If you see me, er, anyone suffering from December Dope Disorder, do not be alarmed. Simply shake your head, mock from a distance or, if you have a designated driver, choose to participate. Much like sleepwalking or a Kardashian's fame, it will run its course soon enough.

Until March Madness sets in.

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BULL'S EYE

These five aren't duds. Vote for your fave by texting "tue" followed by the number next to your choice to 87708.



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@gagarvey
RedEye reporter

TEXT:1



Scott Bolohan
@scottbolohan
RedEye special contributor

TEXT:2



John Dooley
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chicagonow.com/
chicago-tough

TEXT:3



Clark Jones
@clarknyss
Stand-up comic

TEXT:4



Evil Super Computer
@evlsprcmpr
Can't stand humans

TEXT:5

1	Who was your Chicago sports stud or dud of 2011?	Dud: Jay Cutler's thumb.	Dud: Brian Campbell. For nostalgic purposes.	Stud: Dolph Lundgren. Annual winner since '84. Not from Chicago? Dolph is insulted! All hail Dolph!	Ozzie Guillen: stud. He went to Miami, the one city where all the reporters will understand him.	Carlos Zambrano was a dud to you humans. But to me he was a hero.
2	The Bulls schedule is so busy the Bulls are working harder than Patrick Kane's liver.	... Joakim Noah won't have time to get a haircut.	... that even the call girls in NBA cities will tire out — sadness and tragedy.	... Luol Deng keeps jumping out of the barber's chair mid-way through.	... Carlos Boozer is conserving his voice by only yelling after every other play.
3	If the L.A. Clippers are called "Lob City," the Bulls should be what?	"Mob City."	"The Big Apple."	"Disciplined Defensive Rotation City?" Sorry, Thibs told me to write that.	"Who we kiddin', it's going to Derrick Rose" City.	"Champs." That's all that matters.
4	What's the bright side to the Bears season?	At this point, releasing Sam Hurd might have been the best move of 2011.	Josh McCown can dunk.	Nathan Enderle's growth in the "squeezing Gatorade into players' mouths while wearing helmets" category.	No more long, overdrawn press conferences from Marion Barber.	We machines decided not to overtake the human race completely. Maybe 2012. HAHAAHAHA!
5	What could go wrong if Shaquille O'Neal takes part in Wrestlemania?	The Shaq Attack takes a chair to the face?	He might have to throw a free punch.	Rebound in popularity may convince producers that a "Shazaam 2" might be a good idea.	Nine words: "Oh no, it's Khloe Kardashian off the top rope!"	Somebody takes him seriously?



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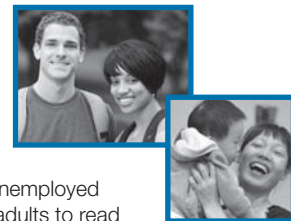
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Meet Mr. MVP

There is another MVP in the Bulls organization besides Derrick Rose. **Nikola Mirotic** (left) of

Real Madrid was named Euroleague MVP for December. Mirotic, acquired from Minnesota, which drafted him 23rd in this year's draft, averaged 18.5 points and 6.8 rebounds during the month.



Get in the ring, Shaq

In an interview last week, former NBA behemoth Shaquille O'Neal hinted he might take part in WWE's Wrestlemania 28. It wouldn't be Shaq's first trip to the ring, either. He faced The Big Show in June 2009 on "Raw." Wrestlemania is April 1, 2012. Don't be an April fool, Shaq.

THE DIGIT



17.8 MIL

Average number of viewers who tuned in to Sunday night's Bears-Green Bay game.



GO NUTS!

SETTLING AGE-OLD SPORTS DISAGREEMENTS, ONE ARGUMENT AT A TIME

According to wedding planning site **theknot.com**, 31 percent of proposals take place between December and February. And with hockey, football and basketball season in full swing, you know what that means: Scoreboard proposals. So, are these gestures of affection utterly romantic or just plain cheesy?

This week: Scoreboard proposals: Romantic or cheesy?

ROMANTIC

Lisa Arnett

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VS

CHEESY

Matt Pals

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A scoreboard proposal may not be the most original, but when it comes to admirable qualities in your mate for life, does originality even make it into the top five? It takes more effort and planning to have "Will you marry me" spelled out in lights than just getting down on one knee at a fancy restaurant or plunking the ring in the bottom of a champagne glass, and if your fiancée-to-be is a sports fan, then what could be more appropriate? Besides, true love can never be considered overplayed. Say it with me now: Awww.

My sincere congratulations to anyone preparing to pop the question. That said: Why involve tens of thousands of strangers in a priceless moment between you and the person you love? The text appears on the screen for a few seconds and then it's replaced by someone else who has the same idea, which doesn't make you look so original. Personalize, don't replicate.

PREVIOUS WINNER: IS FOOTBALL BETTER AT HOME OR AT THE GAME?

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MAJOR STYLE POINTS

7 VIDEO GAMES THAT FOUND CREATIVE WAYS TO PUSH PLAYERS' BUTTONS

By Ryan Smith

FOR REDEYE

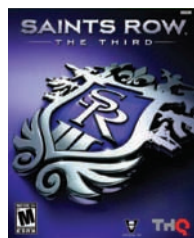
Let's face it, generic year-end "best of" lists get super boring year after year. "Skyrim" and "L.A. Noire" are good games? Cool story, bro. That's why RedEye's handing out some unconventional awards along with its pick for the best video game of 2011. Readers, we give you the 2011 Gamey Awards.



BEST USE OF NOSTALGIA NBA 2K12

The NBA lockout meant that real basketball wasn't played until Dec. 25. We still be bitter at the current league, but "NBA 2K12" did a good job emphasizing the glory days of the NBA from the 1970s, '80s and '90s.

emphasizing the glory days of the NBA from the 1970s, '80s and '90s.

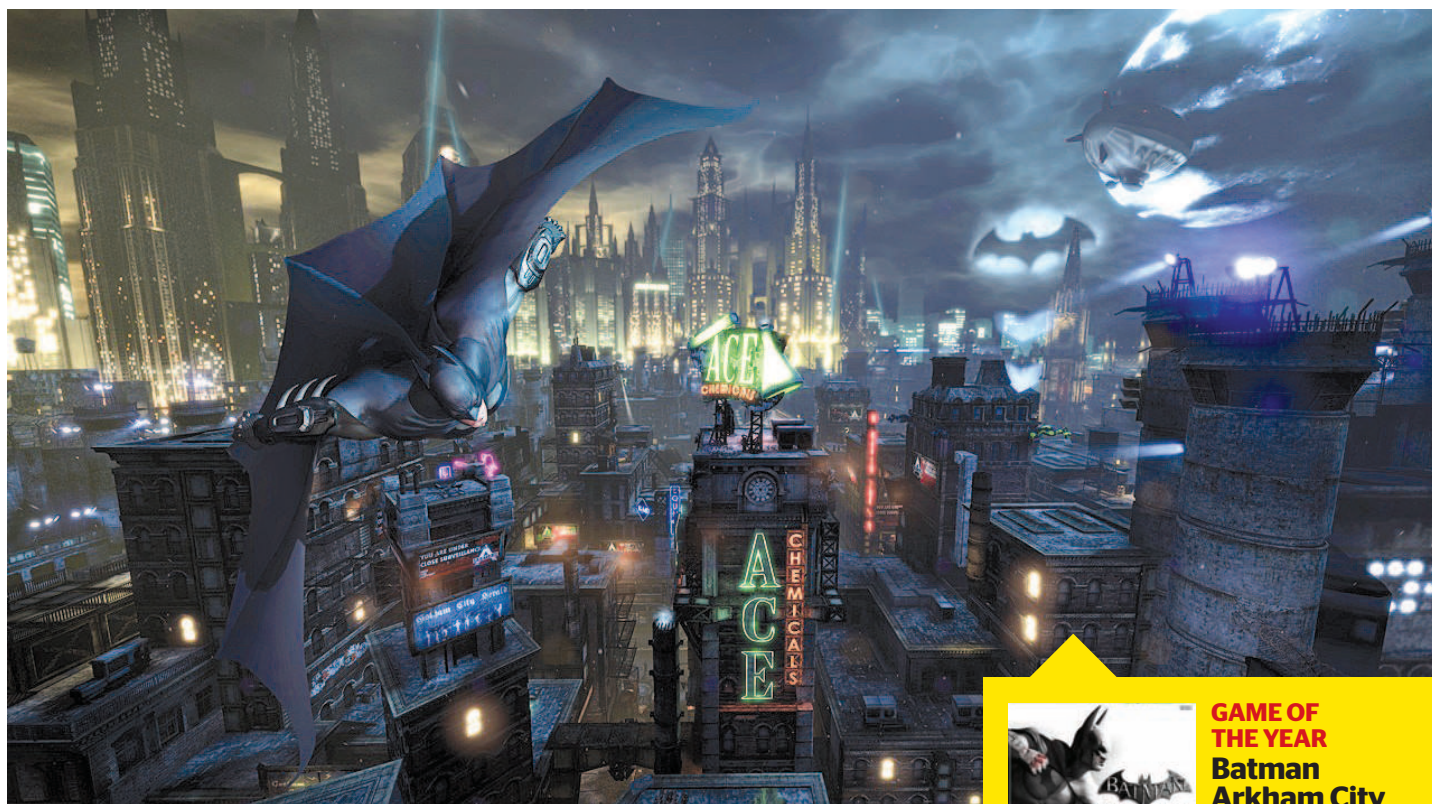


MORBIDLY CREATIVE AWARD Saints Row: The Third

If Spike TV needs more material for its "1,000 Ways to Die," the producers should pop in "Saints Row: The Third" for a little lesson in creative death scenes. In this open-world crime game from THQ, you can kill bystanders with every weapon imaginable (guns, missiles, lasers), or by performing wrestling moves on them, beating them with sex toys or even shooting them out of a clown car equipped with a cannon.

STRANGEST FIGHTING GAME CHARACTER Phoenix Wright

How is it possible to feature a playable character in a fighting game that doesn't even fight? Capcom somehow found a way by shoehorning Phoenix Wright into its update of "Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3." That's right, as in Mr. Ace Attorney. Instead of punching and kicking his way to victory against the likes of Ryu and Wolverine, Phoenix Wright weaponizes paperwork, calls out his mystical assistant Maya Fey or summons a giant judge's gavel to slam down his enemies. It's an unconventional move, but we do not object, your honor.



GAME OF THE YEAR Batman Arkham City

The 300 hours of game play in "Elder Scrolls: Skyrim" might technically give gamers more

bang for their buck, but I go most batty for "Batman Arkham City." The game world is bigger and badder, there are more snazzy gadgets for your utility belt, and this time you can take a break from the Caped Crusader to play as Catwoman.



CARPAL TUNNEL AWARD The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword

Here's a tip: you might want to head to the gym and work out your biceps and forearms before venturing

into game world of "Zelda: Skyward Sword." To defeat all the colorful enemies and underworld dungeons, you're going have to wiggle and waggle your WiiMote around thousands of times to pull off all of the motion controlled sword slices and thrusts. But hey, be glad you don't actually have to carry a heavy shield or wear Link's flamboyant green pajamalike outfit in real life.

MOST INTERESTING CHARACTER Victor 'Sully' Sullivan

Most elderly characters in video games serve as aphorism-spouting gurus or spell-casting wizards, but in "Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception," Sully is different. He's long in the tooth, but Nathan Drake's mentor is still a fearless, swaggering, skirt-chasing rascal who provides comic relief and level-headedness to contrast Drake's impulsiveness. It's hard to look at Sully and not be reminded of The Most Interesting Man in the World from the Dos Equis commercials. Hey, Sully: Stay awesome, my friend.

THE LOL AWARD Portal 2

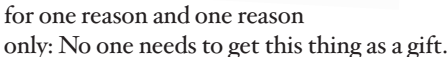
Video games are many things, but funny usually isn't one of them. In the realm of humor, games tend to be about as hilarious as a cream pie in the face or one-liners from presidential candidates. But "Portal 2," Valve's brilliant action-puzzler, blends head-scratching riddles with brilliantly delivered, laugh-out-loud dialogue. We can't think of a character in any medium with better lines than Stephen Merchant's goofy evil robot Wheatley.

RYAN SMITH IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

Folks, there are only two types of people in this great nation of ours: Those who have

Sure, most of the F-bombs are back, as is most of the other cursing (which does, I admit, make some of the drunken, screamed arguments a little bit easier to follow). But inexplicably, some of the curse words remain edited out. There's even a scene where the

I'm assuming the post-holiday release is



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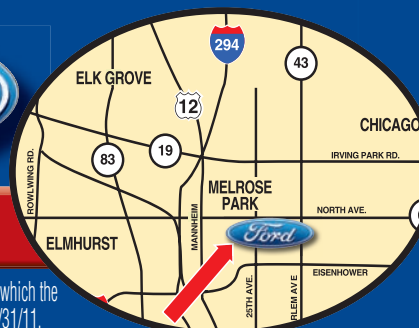
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2004 Ford Sport Trac #47618A, 4x4, Red, Alloys, XLT, Full Pwr	\$12,577	2010 Chevrolet Malibu LT #XP16153, 4 Cyl, Remotes, PW, CD, Clean	\$13,877	2009 Mercury Sable Premier #XP15702, Lthr, Roof, Silver, Htd Seats	\$17,877	2008 Jeep Wrangler #47659B, Unlimited, Two Tops, 4x4	\$21,577	2011 Ford Explorer Limited #47769A, Lthr, Remote Start, Black	\$32,977
2008 Ford Escape #47420A, 4 Cyl, Auto, Gray, CD, PW, 4x4	\$12,577	2009 Chevrolet Impala #P16028, Blk, V6, PW, CD, Alloys	\$13,977	2007 Ford Mustang GT #11478A, Conv't, Auto, V8, Lthr, Blue	\$17,977	2010 Mercury Mariner #47741A, Lthr, Roof, Navi, Black	\$21,877	2006 Land Rover Range Rover #P15753A, Supercharger, Has it All, Must See	\$33,577
2009 Kia Rondo #47181B, Silver, 4 Cyl, PW, 4 Dr, CD	\$12,877	2005 Ford Ranger Edge Pkg #P16245, Blue, S/Cab, 4x4, Low Miles	\$14,577	2008 Dodge Ram Pickup #P16242A, Crew Cab, 4x4, Silver, V8	\$17,977	2010 Ford Edge #P16275, 8100 Miles, White, Loaded, Nice	\$21,877	2011 Ford Edge Sport #11235A, AWD, Roof, Lthr, Blue	\$34,977
2008 Ford Taurus SEL #XP16137, V6, Pwr Seat, Alloys	\$12,877	2011 Chevrolet Impala LS #XP16156, V6, Black Pwr Seat, Nice	\$14,977	2009 Ford Escape XLT #XP16123, 4x4, Red, Full Pwr, 6 Cyl	\$17,977	2001 Ford F150 XL #47691A, Super Cab, 4x4, Silver, Low Miles	\$24,977		
2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LT #XP15898, Blue, Auto, CD, PW	\$12,877	2010 Dodge Caliber SXT #XP15891, PW, CD, Buckets, Red	\$15,477	2008 Jeep Liberty #11710A, Limited, Red, 4x4, Lthr, Must See	\$19,577				

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Christian Bale as Batman in 'The Dark Knight Rises'

Martin Freeman as Bilbo Baggins in 'The Hobbit'

FACEOFF

BATTLE OF THE BLOCKBUSTERS

'THE DARK KNIGHT RISES' VS. 'THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY'

Two of the most anticipated movies of 2012—"The Dark Knight Rises" and "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey"—released new trailers last week, and the rumble of fan reaction was big enough to make even "Dark Knight Rises" villain Bane blush. Bane's terrorist antics take center stage in the "Rises" trailer, highlighted by an explosion he seemingly orchestrates during a football game. It all points to a sequel that ratchets up the tension and paranoia in 2008's "The Dark Knight." Meanwhile, "The Hobbit" clip felt almost nostalgic to some, with "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy director Peter Jackson's sense of whimsy and wonder evident throughout. Two huge movies with two huge fan followings—here is how the sequels stack up. **TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS**



"Dark Knight": Even with the football field blowing up, most critics and observers zeroed in on the Occupy Wall Street-like tone of a scene involving **Selina Kyle (Anne Hathaway)** and Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale). "You and your friends better batten down the hatches, because when [the storm] hits," Hathaway's character hisses, "you're all going to wonder how you ever thought you could live so large and leave so little for the rest of us."
» "Even if Nolan decided against filming at [Occupy Wall Street camping area] Zuccotti Park, it seems he may in fact depict Batman as the 1 percent," Slate's David Haglund wrote.

JUICY STORYLINE

"Hobbit": Juicy storyline No. 1: It is well known to "Hobbit" fans that the "Unexpected Journey" of the title is to claim a treasure guarded by a dragon named Smaug. Alas, Smaug is not in the trailer.
» Juicy storyline No. 2: **Is Thorin Oakenshield, the human leader of the "Hobbit" expedition (played by Richard Armitage), dreamier than Aragorn, the human leader of the "Rings" expedition (played by Viggo Mortensen)?**



July 20

RELEASE DATE

Dec. 14



» in theaters worldwide for "Batman Begins" and "The Dark Knight" **\$1.37 billion**

BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS

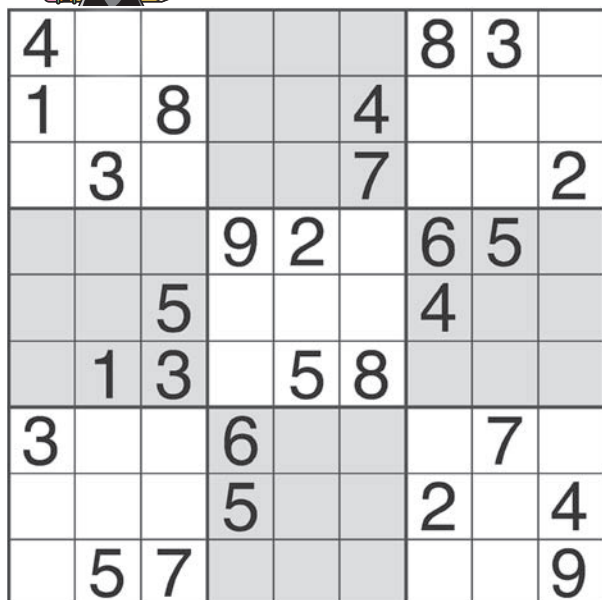
\$2.92 billion » in theaters worldwide for the three "Lord of the Rings" movies

(According to boxofficemojo.com)

"I think they can stop making movies after 'The Dark Knight Rises.' Really, there's no point." —Miguel Conceicao, marketing student

TWITTER FAN REACTION

"You Can Go Straight To Mordor If You Don't Like This THE HOBBIT Trailer." —Devin Faraci, movie blogger



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆



MONDAY'S SOLUTIONS

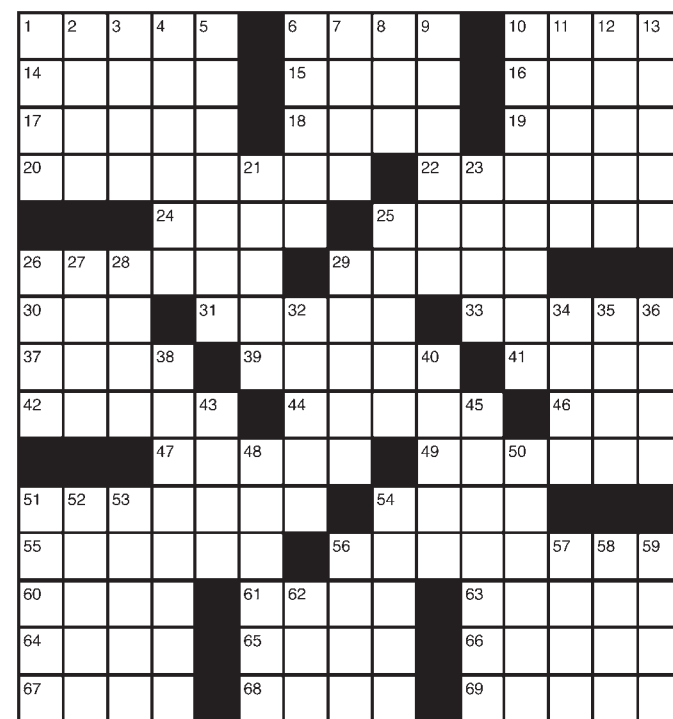


ACROSS

- 1 Shapeless masses
- 6 Twirl
- 10 Actress Turner
- 14 Embankment
- 15 Healthy
- 16 Amazed
- 17 Turn aside
- 18 Perpendicular add-ons
- 19 Poet of old
- 20 Priests' caps
- 22 Flourish
- 24 Cowardice
- 25 Swollen
- 26 TV personality _ Williams
- 29 Farmland
- 30 Orangutan, e.g.
- 31 Closes tightly
- 33 Piers
- 37 Donna or Rex
- 39 Move over
- 41 Overwhelming defeat
- 42 WWI pilot
- 44 _ the street; one interviewed at random
- 46 " _ to Billy Joe"
- 47 _ potato; yam
- 49 _ one's heels; become lively
- 51 _ on; attaches
- 54 Nickname for Elizabeth
- 55 Despises
- 56 Tip of a Bic
- 60 Wild hog
- 61 Thought
- 63 Magazine edition
- 64 Belly button fuzz
- 65 Bacterium
- 66 Jail units
- 67 Antlered animals
- 68 New Jersey hoopsters
- 69 Assumed a prayerful posture

DOWN

- 1 Spill the beans
- 2 Mr. Strauss
- 3 Above
- 4 of; lacking
- 5 Sofas
- 6 Take off fleece
- 7 Friends
- 8 Achy & feverish
- 9 Get comfy
- 10 _ retriever; hunting dog
- 11 Look for
- 12 Gall
- 13 _ up; tallied
- 21 Stories
- 23 on to; clutch
- 25 Buffalo
- 26 Colt's mother



- 27 Newspaper page full of opinions
- 28 Requirement
- 29 Root beer _; ice cream treat
- 32 High points
- 34 Chef
- 35 African antelope
- 36 _ down; resign
- 38 Twists out of shape
- 40 Bus fare, often
- 43 Pitcher
- 45 Criticize over fine details
- 48 Naval rank
- 50 _ ones; elites
- 51 Work by Aesop
- 52 Bubbling
- 53 Prison knife
- 54 Sun's rays
- 56 Saucy
- 57 _ of Capri
- 58 Not valid
- 59 SAT, for one
- 62 Actor Billy _ Williams

TODAY IN THE YEAR...

- 1932:** Radio City Music Hall opened in New York City.
1947: The kids' TV show "Howdy Doody" show made its premiere on NBC.
2001: U.S. officials announced that Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners would be held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
2007: Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated by a gunman at a rally.

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HOT DATE

JUNE 8

The release date of director Ridley Scott's highly anticipated sci-fi thriller "Prometheus." A just-released trailer offers reminders of Scott's "Alien" and a "terrifying premise," Variety reports.



Killer soundtrack

Jennifer Lawrence is almost as ubiquitous as the hype surrounding "The Hunger Games." Universal announced Saturday that the actress will provide vocal contributions to the movie's soundtrack, which will be released early next year. Taylor Swift headlines the album, and the Decemberists and Win Butler and Regine Chassagne of Arcade Fire are on it as well.



Tyler,
The Creator
GETTYIMAGES
PHOTOS

RING IN A BOX

Nice Christmas present, right? Matthew McConaughey popped the question on Christmas Day to Camila Alves, his longtime girlfriend and mom to his two kids, according to Reuters. Almost sounds like the plot of a romantic comedy we'd watch. And they lived happily ever after ...

More living, more color

You can do what you want to do—at the second open casting call for the new "In Living Color." Last week's auditions drew such a big response that producers have scheduled a second casting call for Tuesday—that's today!—from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Laugh Factory Chicago (3175 N. Broadway). Visit showpatroltv.com for more details.

Tyler, the tweeter

You can arrest Tyler, The Creator, but you can't make him stop tweeting. The Odd Future rapper was taken into custody Thursday night in L.A. on suspicion of vandalism after a performance at the Roxy, billboard.com reports. Among the tweets Tyler fired off after his release on bond: "Good Burger Is Such An Amazing Movie."

THE DIGIT

\$46 MILLION

That's how much "Mission: Impossible — Ghost Protocol" took in at the domestic box office over the extended weekend to finish No. 1, Reuters reports. "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows" took the No. 2 spot with an estimated \$31.8 million.



“I was perfectly content to be permanently broken.”

—Sandra Bullock, to The Associated Press, on her frame of mind after the end of her marriage to Jesse James



Matthew
McConaughey
and Camila Alves

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